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MEMORANDUM

NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL

TOP SECRET/SENSITIVE

UNCLASSIFIED

INFORMATION
January 5, 1971

MEMORANDUM FOR: THE FILES

SUBJECT: Vietnam Ad Hoc Working Group Meeting, December 22

Ambassador Sullivan referred to the fact that letters had been sent by dovish Senators to Pham Van Dong on the prisoners and the answers were now coming in in the form of provision of POW lists to Senators Fulbright and Kennedy. The Kennedy representative had already picked up a list in Paris, and Fulbright was sending Lowenstein there for the same purpose. However, the Senate Foreign Relations Committee evidently wanted no publicity on this. There were at least 368 names on the list, but discounting those known to have died or to have been released by Hanoi, we were back to the 339 on the Cora Weiss list. Presumably the release of these lists by the DRV was intended to upstage the GVN on its release of sick and wounded NVA prisoners, a step which Lam would use as the centerpiece of his presentation on December 23.

Sullivan mentioned that we were beginning to run into a problem with a number of POW wives, who had expressed support for Xuan Thuy's proposal the previous week on setting a date for a complete U.S. withdrawal in return for negotiating the release of the POWs. Sullivan declared that he would tell Habib to stick to our standard line and stress that there should be no preconditions on the release of POWs and that all could be released right now. Further on the POWs, Sullivan raised the question of where the GVN release of the sick and wounded NVA POWs would take place. Apparently the GVN was thinking of using the DMZ. Sullivan doubted that the other side would accept the release, and was not sure as to the status of the move in this event. We needed to have a legal opinion. He expressed concern over the possibility that if the POWs were ferried across Ben Hai River, the road from the riverbank might be mined and some POWs might be killed. It was possible, too, that the North Vietnamese might fire on prisoners being ferried across the river.

Sullivan stated that Congressman Findley had seen Secretary Rogers on his proposal for a unilateral release of 1500 NVA POWs by the GVN. The Secretary had not endorsed this proposal on the grounds that the White House position was different than that expressed by Secretary Laird. Colonel Kennedy

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DP 1.5(a)(4)

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...voyed this information to Eliot. Sullivan observed that if the ... House informed State that this unilateral release was not our ..., it should also tell Defense the same thing.

...llivan brought up the question of herbicides, saying that we had knocked ... only crop destruction and not necessarily the use of defoliants for ... purposes. He wondered what chemicals were involved here -- "orange" ... been proscribed, and "white" had been eliminated too. This left only ..., but the use of this chemical had not been mentioned in the message ...om Saigon saying what had been done. Meanwhile Messelson would ...resent his findings on December 29 in Chicago at the meeting of the ...merican Association for the Advancement of Science. Sullivan thought ...at it might be useful to send a member of his staff to listen to Messelson's presentation. We could certainly anticipate some adverse publicity on the herbicide question.

Sullivan mentioned that Ambassador Colby's report on what had been done to improve the GVN's administrative performance had not been too responsive to Dr. Kissinger's request for information on this subject. State was now doing its own report, in consequence of which the deadline for sending it to Dr. Kissinger would have to slip.

Sullivan stated that he had received a paper on PSYOPS in Vietnam which reviewed accomplishments but noted that one issue was still hanging fire -- the question of dropping leaflets over the North. Sullivan noted that on September 30 he had sent letters to Bunker and Abrams (as well as to Ambassador Bruce) asking for their opinion on the desirability of the leaflets. The reply from Bunker and Abrams had just come in indicating that they had reversed their previous negative stand and were now prepared to go ahead with dropping leaflets on an ad hoc basis if we had an important message to convey, and draw up contingency plans. Sullivan remarked that we needed a reply from Ambassador Bruce before proceeding further.

Sullivan noted that he had sent Dr. Kissinger's request for comments on the "Vietnam Economic Development Institute" to Ambassador Bunker for action.

[redacted] 1.3(a)(4)

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1.3(a)(4)

Mr. Nooter referred to the paper on the economic outlook for Vietnam which AID had recently prepared and said that Warren Nutter had agreed with the facts in this paper but not with its estimate of the future. He wanted a much bigger backup in the Vietnamese economy, e.g. floating exchange rate with the piaster. It appeared that he either would not agree to send the paper forward or withhold his comments until his return from his forthcoming trip to Vietnam with Secretary Laird. Nooter wanted to move the paper along in such an event without a Defense clearance.

Nooter reported that a lot of activity was now taking place with respect to Con Son. A long report to this effect had come in from the Public Safety people in Saigon. Bunker had also talked to Thieu on the urgent need for reforms.

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